

Legalize Homes Near Destinations - HF2018/SF2286



The Impacts of Commercial-Only Zoning

Commercial districts serve as destinations for all Minnesotans. These districts are where we work, play, and spend a large amount of our time outside of our homes. Commercial districts are often on main streets with coffee shops, dentists, daycares and hardware stores. In many cities however, Minnesotans are simply not allowed to live in these districts, even if they wanted to.

Often, our cities are zoned so that **commercial districts are physically separate from residential districts**. Because we separate our businesses from our homes, we are unable to walk to a coffee shop or restaurant, and businesses need to provide parking lots for customers. All this adds up to more traffic just to run an errand or go to work. The Legislature should pass HF2018/SF2286 so that Minnesotans can live in walkable neighborhoods with shops and homes above or near them if they so choose.

Allow Minnesotans to Choose to Live Near Destinations

Many Minnesotans want to live in a bustling neighborhood with coffee shops, restaurants, and corner stores. These still exist as "main streets" in many of our older cities and towns. Main streets are walkable neighborhoods with shops on the ground floor and homes above. These neighborhoods are no longer legal to build today due to the arbitrary separation of homes and businesses. We need to make walkable neighborhoods available for Minnesotans who value short commutes, community connections, and climate action. The legislature needs to legalize mixed-use or multifamily developments everywhere that commercial developments are allowed. Allowing mixed-use developments in our existing and new commercial districts creates many benefits:



The Many Benefits of Mixed-Use Zoning

Residents Living in the Mixed-Use Zone	Residents Living Outside of the Mixed-Use Zone	Local Businesses in the Mixed-Use Zone	Government Entities
• Nearby destinations and/or employers • Reduced or eliminated driving costs • More vibrant, walkable neighborhoods • More affordable homes	• Reduced traffic congestion • Destinations are active at all times of the day • Reduced relative property tax burden • More affordable homes	• More customers and/or employees nearby • Less parking required • More vibrant and interesting destination • Home and business in one building mortgage	• Increased property tax income • Increased sales tax income • Reduced road and infrastructure maintenance costs

Support walkable, complete neighborhoods in Minnesota's commercial districts by supporting HF2018/SF2286

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Who we are: Neighbors for More Neighbors stands up for secure, abundant homes for all Minnesotans. We envision a future where we all find homes we love in neighborhoods we choose. Those neighborhoods may include great transit, a community where family and friends are neighbors, or complete neighborhoods with walkable errands and jobs. Every Minnesotan - Black, White, and Indigenous, Minnesota born or newcomer, small town and city-dweller - should have a place to call home in our communities.

Like the rest of the nation, Minnesota has a severe housing shortage. We need to legalize building new homes in neighborhoods that people of all incomes can afford. Today, Minnesota has a patchwork of local zoning laws that restrict and prohibit homes and drive up construction costs. These long-standing policies are blocking Minnesota from creating more homes of different sizes and prices and are making existing housing too expensive. With too few homes, everyone pays more for housing, and many are forced to move further away from jobs, communities, or families. Local zoning laws that restrict and prohibit homes are blocking Minnesota from creating enough needed homes, and are making existing homes too expensive.

Part of the solution is legalizing Mixed Use areas by allowing homes to be built in all commercial areas. This will help by creating consistent rules that allow multi-family homes to be built on vacant or underperforming land and help build bustling neighborhoods with coffee shops, restaurants, and corner stores.

HF2018 / SF2286 would create predictable regulations that allow multifamily market rate and subsidized affordable homes to be built across Minnesota in areas close to jobs, transit, and shops. Many Minnesotans value short commutes, community connections, and climate action and want to live those values. This legislation will help more Minnesotans to more equitably access the housing options that work best for them and their families. Builders and developers can work in different communities with a statewide standard, speeding home production across Minnesota. Now is the time to allow our commercial areas to rebuild and bring more customers closer to businesses.

Zoning History

Apartment bans and separation of cities into commercial, industrial, residential, and multifamily areas were first introduced as a way to keep "undesirable" uses away from residential areas. When we look at the impacts and the intentions of zoning system designers of the 1920s and '30s - their desire was to keep lower-income families and non-white families out of predominantly white cities and suburbs.

The introduction of these economic separation requirements into city codes closely followed Supreme Court and civil rights legislation that declared explicit racial discrimination in housing unconstitutional.

Mixed use zoning is one step towards de-segregating our cities.

